

# Rudolfo Anaya: La Gran Voz Del Llano

University of Arizona Main Library

September-October 2000

Co-curated with Bonnie Travers

While in college, in my freshman year at the University of Arizona in 1977, I took an Introduction to Chicano Studies class, and our assigned readings included *Bless Me, Ultima* and *Heart of Aztlan* by Rudolfo Anaya, a native of New Mexico and one of the best known Chicano fiction writers of the time. I enjoyed both books immensely. *Bless Me, Ultima* was later made into a feature film and to this day remains one of the major classics of Chicano literature.

In September, 2000, I worked with one of my colleagues, Bonnie Travers, to create an exhibit on Anaya's works. He was scheduled to visit the University of Arizona campus the following month, and I was invited to help Bonnie do the exhibit. My assignment involved finding quotes from Anaya's works to accompany copies of his works, many of which were first editions, and all of which were housed in Special Collections. I didn't keep track of which specific books we displayed, but I held on to the quotes which are noted below. I found bookcovers for most of his works online and they are displayed as well, in no particular order.

Here's the news release for the exhibit, courtesy of Julieta Gonzales and the UA News Service:

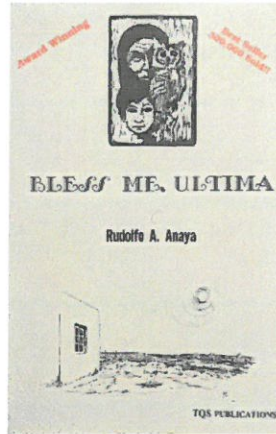
## **Rudolfo Anaya: La Gran Voz del Llano Exhibition and Reading**

Julieta Gonzalez  
Oct. 10, 2000

*"In celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, The University of Arizona Library will present an exhibition, "Rudolfo Anaya: La Gran Voz del Llano," on view from now until Oct. 31 at the Main Library on the third floor. The exhibit highlights Anaya's many novels, short stories, plays and essays as well as interviews with the author.*

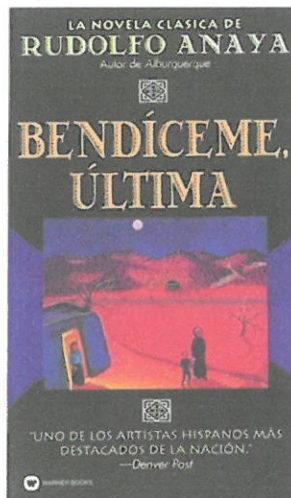
*Anaya is best known for his groundbreaking novel, "Bless Me, Ultima," the story of a young Hispano growing up in New Mexico. According to Charles Tatum, dean of the College of Humanities at the UA, "Rudolfo Anaya is arguably the most important Chicano writer of his generation. He has left a permanent mark on the renaissance of Chicano literature that began in the 1960's."*

*The College of Humanities will sponsor a reading by Anaya on Oct. 12 at 7:30 p.m. in Room S202 of the UA Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering (AME) Building, located at 1130 N. Mountain Ave., at the northeast corner of Speedway and Mountain."*



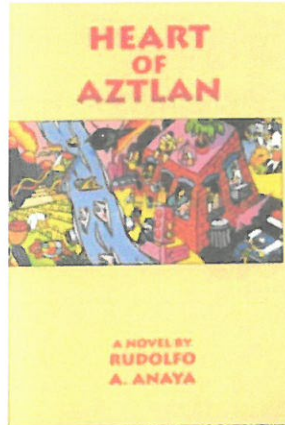
“My journey has been that of a writer, and in my first novel it was the curandera Ultima, the indigenous woman who came to speak to me and share her secrets. She reflects the nature of the Virgen de Guadalupe, the indigenous mother born of the synthesis of Spanish virgin and Indian goddess. It is through Ultima that I began to discover myself”.

From the essay, “The New World Man,” originally published in the Before Columbus Review, Fall/Winter, 1989, vol. 1, nos. 2 and 3.



“In Bless Me, Ultima, my first novel, I looked at my childhood through the eyes of a novelist. In the process of writing the novel, I explored childhood experiences, dreams, folklore, mythology, and communal relationships that shaped me in my formative years. Writing became a process of self-exploration.”

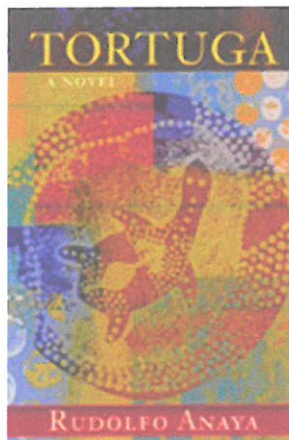
From the essay, “La Llorona, El Kookooee, and Sexuality”, originally published in Bilingual Review/Revista Bilingue. Vol XVII, No. 1, January-April, 1992.



“By naming ourselves Chicanos, we stamped an era with our communal identity; we reaffirmed our humanity by exploring and understanding the nature of our mothers, the indigenous American women. We took the word “Chicano” from “Mexicano,” dropping the first syllable and keeping the “xicano.”

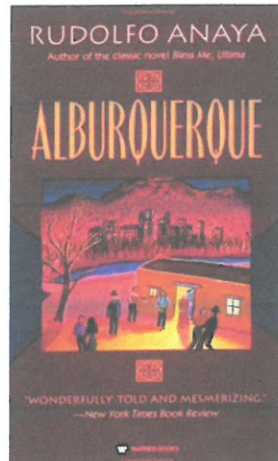
We are proud of that heritage, even though we are not Mexican citizens, and although we are citizens of the United States we are not Anglo-Americans. We have our own history rooted in this land. The word Chicano defined our space in time, that is, our history and our identity. “Chicano” embraced our Native American heritage, an important element in our history”.

From the essay, “The New World Man,” originally published in the Before Columbus Review, Fall/Winter, 1989, vol. 1, nos. 2 and 3.



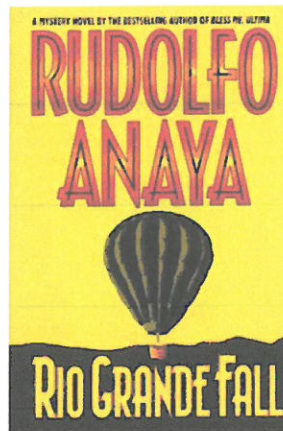
“For the Hispano Community, the process of growth and change has been painful. But the turbulence of the surface change can be met if the values of the ancestors remain rooted in our memory, if our language, values and ceremonies don’t die. The surface is like the surface of the muddy waters of the Rio Grande, sometimes turbulent, sometimes peaceful. But beneath lie the elements of water and earth, and the old principle elements of faith. To those we can always pledge our allegiance”.

From the essay, “At the Crossroads,” originally published in New Mexico Magazine, Vol. 60, no. 12, December, 1982.



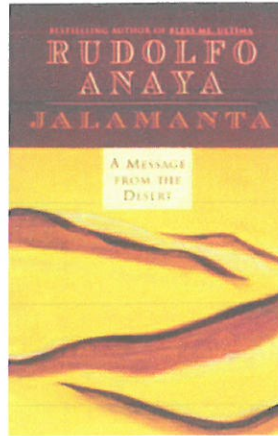
“The past is not dead; it lives in our hearts, as myth lives in our hearts. We need those most human qualities of the world myths to help guide us on our road today. My novel *Albuquerque* addresses some of these questions. The city where I live, like any other city in the Southwest, reflects the political processes that have permeated our land. The novel is about change, the change that has come during our lifetime. In it, some of the principal characters are driven by the desire to conquer the landscape, to control the land and the water of the Rio Grande. Others, members of the old tribes, take refuge in withdrawal in order to survive in urban poverty. They withdraw to their circles of belief to wait out the storm”.

From the essay, “Mythical Dimensions/Political Reality” originally published as “The Myth of Quetzalcoatl in a Contemporary Setting: Mythical Dimensions/Political Reality” in *Western American Literature*, Vol. XXIII, No. 3, November 1988.



“The Americas represent a wonderful experiment in the synthesis of divergent worldviews, and each one of us is a representative of that process. The illuminations of self that are revealed as we explore and understand our true natures can be one of the most rewarding experiences of our lives, for so much of the sensitive part of life is a search and understanding of the inner self. To define ourselves as we really are and not as others wish us to be allows us to become authentic, and that definition carries with it the potential of our humanism”.

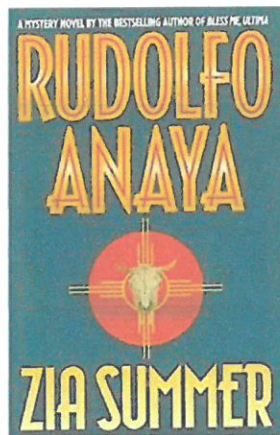
From the essay, “The New World Man,” originally published in the *Before Columbus Review*, Fall/Winter, 1989, vol. 1, nos. 2 and 3.



“How did I begin this journey of self knowledge? I listened to the cuentos of the old people, the stories of their history, and in retelling those stories and starting my own odyssey, I had to turn within. I had to know myself. Everyone does. The spiritual beliefs and mysticism of the Catholic Church and the love of the earth were elements of my childhood, so I used those sources in my stories. The folkways of my community became the web of the fictions I create, for the elements of drama exist within the stories of the folk”.

From the essay, “The New World Man,” originally published in the Before Columbus Review, Fall/Winter, 1989, vol. 1, nos. 2 and 3.

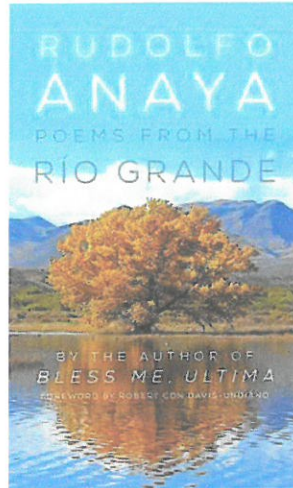
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“We have within us the inner resources to become new guardians of the earth and of peace.

We have seen the blossoming of this potential in our generation. Chicano art, music and literature have gained a foothold and are shaping new perceptions. Within the arts lie reflections of our values, not only the cultural trappings of the day-to-day world but the old values which spring from our mythologies. Respect for the earth of Aztlan is one of these values, and if we are truly living in an era of new consciousness, we must reach further into our human potential and consider Aztlan a homeland without boundaries”.

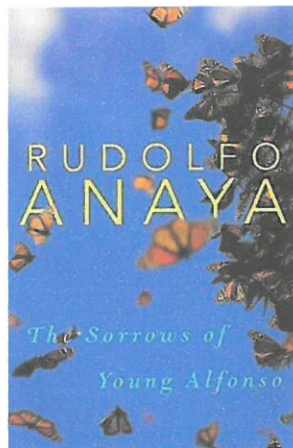
From the essay, “Aztlan”, first published in Aztlan: Essays on the Chicano Homeland. Albuquerque, NM: El Norte Publications, 1989.



“What is important to me as a writer is to find the words by which to describe myself and my relationship to others. I can now speak of my history, and posit myself at the center of that history. I stand poised at the center of power, the knowing of myself, the heart and soul of the New World man alive in me”.

From the essay, “The New World Man,” originally published in the Before Columbus Review, Fall/Winter, 1989, vol. 1, nos. 2 and 3.

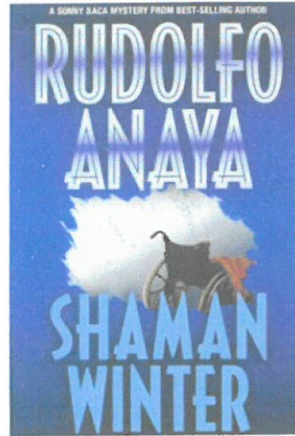
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“Those who fear diversity in education and fear that the canon of Western civilization is under attack, continue to belittle efforts to include different languages and histories in the school curriculum. Hispanic/Latino efforts to participate in the school systems have been demeaned and it is our children who have suffered. Children know when they’re not respected, and when they feel they have lost self-respect they leave the schools.”

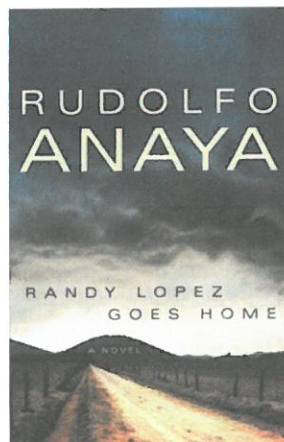
From the essay, “On the Education of Hispanic Children,” The Albuquerque Journal, May 23, 1991, p. b3.

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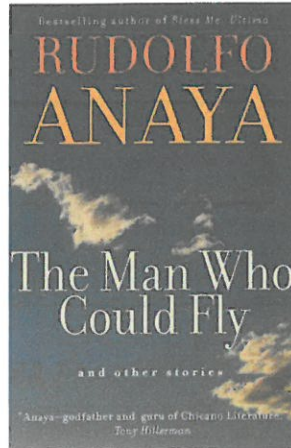
“We must not allow our children to feel shame simply because of their cultural background. It is not shameful to be different; rather it is part of the beauty of the cultural diversity of this country. We must insist that quality education for our children in this country include a reflection of their language and history”.

From the essay, “On the Education of Hispanic Children,” in The Albuquerque Journal, May 12, 1991, p. b3.



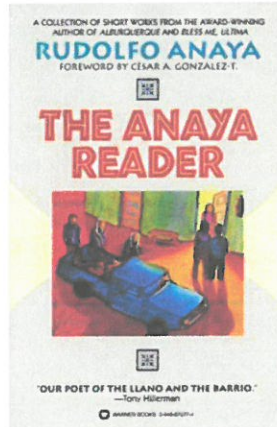
“Reading is the key to a liberated life. We must take action to wrest our freedom to teach from those forces that still don’t acknowledge the existence of the multidimensional and multicultural realities of our country. We must infuse into the study of language and literature the stories of the many communities that compose our country.”

From the essay, “The Censorship of Neglect,” originally published in the English Journal, Vol. 81, No. 5, September, 1992.



“Many of the voices of the Americas have been repressed. But there is a change in the air. New songs are being sung, new stories told. New battles for human decency are daily being fought. During our own time, writers from many oppressed nations have spoken out. Mothers have marched in the streets against unjust governments. They are the lions, pointing the way for us to follow. Together, then, let us take command of our destinies and make our voices heard.”

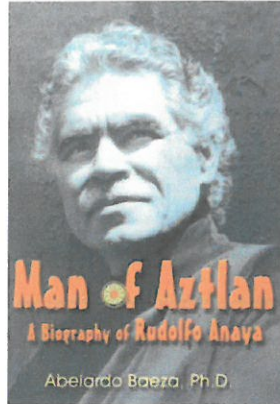
From the essay, “Bendiceme, America”, first published in Bendiceme, America: Latino Writers of the United States. NY: Mercantile Library of New York, 1993.



“As I review my writings, I understand that it is the indigenous American perspective, or New World view, that is at the core of my search. I have explored the nature of my mother, not only the symbolic Indian mother but the real Indian mothers of the Americas. The blood that whispers my feelings about the essence of the earth and people of the Americas is the soul of my mother; it reveals the symbols and mythology of the New World, and that comprises the substratum of my writings”.

From the essay, “The New World Man,” originally published in the Before Columbus Review, Fall/Winter, 1989, vol. 1, nos. 2 and 3.





“Our future is at stake. We who value the earth as a creative force must renew our faith in the values of the old communities, the ceremonies of relationship, the dances and fiestas, the harmony in our way of life, and the mythic force we can tap to create beauty and peace. We must speak out clearly against the political and economic processes whose only goal is material gain”.

From the essay, “Mythical Dimensions/Political Reality” originally published as “The Myth of Quetzalcoatl in a Contemporary Setting: Mythical Dimensions/Political Reality” in Western American Literature, Vol. XXIII, No. 3, November 1988.